

**Nidra- A Psychosomatic Approach**

Dr Prathibha C K<sup>1</sup>, Prof Dr KB Mahapatra<sup>2</sup>, Dr G C Nanda<sup>3</sup>, Dr S K Pradhan<sup>4</sup>, Dr Anandaraman P V<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>Ph.D Scholar, GAM Puri, Utkal University, Odisha, India

<sup>2</sup>Director, Pt Dr S S L Ayurveda Medical College and Hospital, Banjali, Ratlam, Madhya Pradesh, India, dr.kailas bhusan mahapatra.

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Director and in Charge, Dr. A L research Centre for Ayurveda(CCRAS), Chennai, Tamilnadu, India,

<sup>4</sup>Associate Professor, GAM Puri, Utkal University, Odisha, India

<sup>5</sup>Professor, School of Ayurveda, Amrita University, Kollam, Kerala, India

**Corresponding Author:** Dr Prathibha C K, Ph.D Scholar, GAM Puri, Utkal University, Odisha, India

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**Abstract**

Sleep one among the tripods of life. The health benefits attributed to it varies from a happy and healthy life to death. Eventhough the physiology is not fully explored; these benefits of sleep can be explained in terms the effects on quality of life, immune system, reproductive system etc. These evidences helps to explore the psychosomatic reach of sleep in a better way.

**Keywords:** Sleep, Nidra, Psychosomatic Approach.

**Introduction**

The tripods of life are Ahara, Nidra and Brahmacharya<sup>i</sup>. Nidra is most important among them as it provides rest to the body and mind. Even though Ahara nourishes the body, sleep can do the same in the absence of the former. Sleep is a most significant universal human behaviour occupying roughly one third of human life, yet most individuals know little about sleep. Although its function remains to be fully elucidated, sleep is a universal need of all higher life forms including humans, absence of which has serious physiological and psychological consequences.

**Psychosomatic Approach**

Health is the homeostasis of the 3 Dosha and sleep occurs when body and mind are tiered and when mind stops reacting to the external stimulus. Kapha is the Dosha which in normalcy produces sound night sleep and in abnormally is responsible for daytime sleepiness. Pitta Dosha also is associated with sleep induction because of its Snigdha Guna. Among the Manasika Guna, Satwika and Tamasika Bhava enhances sleep and Rajo Guna disturbs it. Sukha and Dukha, Pushti and Karshya, Bala and Abala, Vrishata, and Kleebatha, Jnana, and Ajnana, Jeevana and Mrithyu are all dependent of ones sleep pattern<sup>ii</sup>. Even though these factors have been explained long back by our Acharyas, now it has been scientifically proved by various researches. Here the psychosomatic approach to sleep is elaborated based on the above factors.

**Sukha and Dukha:** Sleep is an important phenomenon which can promote health and can cause ill health. Sama Dosha is the classical feature of health and an abnormal Vata and Pitta and Ksheena Kapha can produce a disease or insomnia. Recent researches explain that sleep loss or sustained wakefulness may cause alterations in neurobehavioral functions that

may result in depression<sup>iii</sup>. The health promoting action of sleep can only be understood when a study is done on a disease aspect. Hautom et al (1998) said that insomnia is related to decreased quality of life, social and interpersonal functioning, and workplace performance, and any of these could result in levels of distress or life events that may trigger, maintain, or worsen major depressive disorder<sup>iv</sup>. A positive relation with insomnia symptoms and type 2 diabetes incidence was also established in a prospective cohort study<sup>v</sup>. *Sleep deficiency contributes to the risk for several ' medical epidemics, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, cancer and so on.* . So a disturbed sleep can be a result of physical or psychological ailment and it can also be a consequence of the same.

**Pushti and Karshya:** A good sleep can nourish the body and a bad sleep will deplete the bodily tissues. Conservation theory of sleep says that sleep is an adaptive behaviour to conserve energy. Body tries to save the energy as it has utilised it during the day. During night the food is scarce, and so it has to conserve the energy. Michelle Lampl (2011) et al suggests the close relation between the growth of infants and sleep<sup>vi</sup>. A good sleep induction may be considered for other health-promoting behaviours, such as improved nutrition and increased activity levels. Moreover, the secretion of growth hormone is dependent on slow sleep wave pattern<sup>vii</sup> and is further enhanced by sleep. So when a sleep is decreased in quality and quantity, there can be loss of strength and bulk of the body leading to Vata Vriddhi and Karshya.

**Bala and Abala:** Immunity and strength of the body is dependent on the quality and quantity of sleep. Nidra increases Kapha Dosha and Kapha gives Bala. So in a state of Nidranasha the Bala is reduced. The word Vyadhi Kshamatwa is also attributed to Kapha Dosha in Ayurveda. It is revealed that human immune system and sleep both are associated and influenced by each other. Differentiated immune cells with immediate effector functions, like cytotoxic NK cells and terminally differentiated CTL, peak during the wakeful period thus allowing an efficient and fast combat of intruding antigens and reparation of tissue damage, which are more likely to occur during the active phase of the organism. But, undifferentiated or less differentiated cells like naive and central memory T cells peak during the night, when the more slowly evolving adaptive immune response is initiated<sup>viii</sup>. According to the restorative theory of sleep, sleep restores depleted sources of energy and removes waste from muscles while repairing cells. Here the role of immune system is very much evident. Sleep deprivation makes a living body susceptible to many infectious agents and deterioration of systemic circulation of leukocytes<sup>ix</sup>.

**Vrishata, and Kleebatha:** Virility of the person is also dependent on the nature of sleep. Fluctuations of sleeping patterns has a direct impact on the Dosha which in turn effects the Dhathu. Rasa, Rakta and Shukra Dhathu contributes the reproductive system in Ayurveda. Sleep deprivation causes decrease in FSH, prolactin and testosterone which may have an impact on the reproductive life of an individual. Since fertility hormones exhibit circadian rhythm they will influence ovulation, conception, endometrial growth etc. A study conducted on male rats reveals that there is an influence of sleep deprivation on the male reproductive system including sperm quality<sup>x</sup>. Moreover, stress is the underlying cause of insomnia these days and there are enough evidences to relate it with the endocrine system.

**Jnana, and Ajnana:** Sleep can influence the memory and intelligence of a person. Recent researches characterize sleep as a brain state optimizing memory consolidation, whereas the waking brain being optimized for encoding of memories. Sleep deprivation, can impair working memory in measures of memory, speed of cognitive processing, attention and task switching<sup>xi</sup>. A study shows that children with higher intelligence have lengthier NREM and short REM sleep patterns as

recorded in slandered electrographic measures<sup>xii</sup>. Sleep deprivation significantly degrades the normally reciprocal associations between these central and peripheral emotion-signalling systems, most prominent at the level of cardiac-amygdala coupling. In addition, REM sleep physiology across the sleep-rested night significantly predicts the next-day success of emotional discrimination, suggesting a role for REM sleep in affective brain recalibration<sup>xiii</sup>.

**Jeevana and Mrithyu:** As Nidra is one of the Upasthambha of life, it can better be said as life is dependent on sleep. Aging has an association with sleep. Age-related disease risk has been linked to short sleep duration and sleep disturbances. Though specific molecular pathways linking sleep loss with diseases of aging are not well understood, key cellular events seen with aging are thought to contribute to disease. Quality of life can be improved by assessing and treating insomnia in older people says many researches.

### **Conclusion**

Sleep is an essential phenomenon of life starts from birth and ends in death. Its quality and quantity varies from time to time and is dependent on various physical and psychological factors. Improved sleep has an positive impact on ones quality of life, physical functions and psychological stability.

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